



INTEGRATED STIMULUS PACKAGE TO IMPROVE RESILIENCE (INSPIRE)

QUARTER 1 REPORT (NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2013)

Applicant Organization Name: Mercy Corps	
Headquarters Contact Information Contact Person: Steve Zodrow Senior Program Officer 45 SW Ankeny Street Portland, OR 97204 Telephone: +1 503 896 5729 Email: szodrow@mercycorps.org	Field Contact Information Contact Person: Mathieu Rouquette Country Director, South Sudan Tompson, Juba Juba, South Sudan Telephone: +211 912 724 445 Email: mrouquette@ss.mercycorps.org
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Overview of Implementation Period

Less than three weeks after the INSPIRE kick off, fighting between government and opposition forces in South Sudan ensued (starting on December 15, 2013). The crisis has resulted in widespread death and destruction of towns, villages and markets, the displacement of 575,500 people, and 112,200 have sought refuge in neighboring countries. In Unity State, fighting between government and opposition forces has displaced an estimated 115,000 people.¹ Over the last several weeks, insecurity in Mayom, Rubkona and other counties have driven the populations southwards to Koch and Leer counties (Unity), and to neighboring Warrap State and the Abyei Administrative Area (AAA). In Leer County alone, there has been an influx of 10,000 IDPs and 6,300 in Koch respectively. Recent IOM reports indicate that Twic County (Warrap) currently hosts 12,195 IDPs from Unity State, while the AAA has received close to 2,600 IDPs from Abiemnom County.

Although the Abyei Administrative Area (AAA) has remained relatively calm throughout the unrest, spillover effects, including an influx of IDPs and insecurity on the roads have affected the price and supply of key commodity prices, placing a strain on households and markets. In Unity, fighting has led to massive population movements and the destruction of population centers and markets. Furthermore, FEWSNET projects that conflicted-affected areas of Unity State are quickly moving towards *crisis* (Phase 3) levels of food insecurity, with the possibility of further sliding into *emergency* (Phase 4) levels if food

¹ UNOCHA, "South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot." January 23, 2014.

<<https://www.dropbox.com/s/6qkqltwer3sqirz/South%20Sudan%20humanitarian%20snapshot%20as%20of%2023%20January%202014.pdf>>

assistance and short-to-medium term livelihood support is not provided.² Currently, it is unclear when Mercy Corps' Bentiu and Leer teams will be able to resume activities in Unity State under the INSPIRE program.

This first quarterly report details INSPIRE activities covered in the period between mid-November 2013 and December 2013. INSPIRE was kick started with a briefing with partners and stakeholders, including the UN cluster leads, INGOs, and local government partners in both Unity (Leer and Rubkona) and the AAA. A joint grant kick off workshop was planned for January 2014 in Abyei. However, it has been temporarily put on hold until the situation stabilizes.

In the period under review, the following program staff were recruited and oriented in the AAA and Unity State: 1 Project Manager; 2 Senior Project Officers; 11 Project Officers; and 14 Officers.

In the same period, procurement of vegetable seeds, tools for both kitchen gardening and cash for work, and village savings and loans association materials was initiated. However, due to the insecurity and the lack of road access, it is currently not possible to deliver the Unity State consignment.

1.1 IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION/FOOD SECURITY

1.1.1. Selection, Identification and registration of 2,000 HHs in AAA and Unity

Selection and identification of beneficiary households began with consultative meetings with chiefs and local leaders in AAA, and Rubkona and Leer in Unity State. The local leaders were key in identifying and selecting village committees. By the time of writing this report, 18 committees; 13 in AAA and 5 in Unity had been formed. These committees will support Mercy Corps in the identification and selection of beneficiaries to participate in the planned food security and livelihood activities.

1.1.2. Entrepreneurship support to thirty traders (20 seed venders and 10 blacksmiths) in business growth and technical knowledge

This activity will be conducted between February and April 2014, before the onset of the rainy season.

1.1.3. Re-constitution of agricultural assets (seeds and tools) for 1,500 households in Unity and AAA through Agro Seed Fairs and animal assets (goats) to 500 households in Unity and AAA

The activity will be implemented alongside activity 1.1.2 before the rainy season begins. However preparatory activities including discussions with traders started in early December.

1.1.4. Agronomy and agro forestry training for 100 lead farmers in AAA and Unity State

Lead farmers will be selected after finalization of the CFW participant lists, whose identification has started this quarter.

1.1.5. Tree nursery and horticulture cash grants (co-investments) to thirty producers/ groups (15 AAA, 15 Unity)

Selection of producer groups will start in March 2014.

² FEWSNET, South Sudan Food Security Update Oct 13- Apr 14

2. ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND MARKET SYSTEMS

2.1. TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT

2.1.2. Cash Transfer for 500 most vulnerable households at US\$ 40 per household per month for four months in Unity State and AAA (EVIs displaced from Unity will receive cash for 2 months in Abyei)

Plans are underway to start the identification and selection of cash transfer beneficiary households in AAA. This activity has also been modified to include extremely vulnerable individual (EVIs) displaced in AAA from Unity State who will be assisted with cash for a period of two months. Whereas this activity had already started in Unity, it has been halted because of the ongoing crisis.

2.1.3. 1,500 households participate in 20 cash for work projects for a period of 4 months in AAA and Unity State (3-5 CFW projects will be started in February while monitoring of the markets continues)

In consultation with the SSRRC and community leaders, Cash for Work projects have been identified and submitted to Mercy Corps in AAA for selection. Selected projects will be shared with Mercy Corps Country Office to seek approval from OFDA.

2.2. LIVELIHOODS RESTORATION

2.2.1. 2-day business training modules for 80 businesses on 'Start and Improve Your Own Business' across the AAA and Unity State

This activity has been planned to start in March this year.

2.2.2. Entrepreneurship support to thirty traders for bulk procurement in AAA and Unity State

This activity will also start in the second quarter of the project.

2.2.3. Enable livelihoods skills development for thirty youth through apprenticeships

This activity has been planned to start in the third quarter of the project.

2.4. MICROFINANCE

2.4.1. Mobilize the formation of 60 VSLA groups of approximately 25 members each, in Unity State and the AAA

Mobilization for the formation of village saving and loans associations started in the reporting period in both AAA and Unity. Nineteen VSLAs comprising of 25 members each were formed in the AAA. In Unity, this activity has been suspended until the situation normalizes. Mobilization for the formation of an additional 11 groups in the AAA is ongoing.

2.4.2. Provide initial 3-day training per group and VSLA materials

This activity will start in the second quarter.

2.4.3. Data collection and follow up

This activity will start in the second quarter.

CONCLUSION

The current crisis has reduced road access, caused massive population movements and limits our current ability to operate in large parts of Unity State. As such, the changing operational environment requires regular monitoring and a degree of flexibility on work plans and areas of intervention.

Furthermore, multiple emergency assessments are planned for and underway to determine the prevailing market conditions and the immediate needs of the IDP caseload. A Rapid Assessment of Markets (RAM) was completed in Twic County and the AAA to determine the extent to which markets and supply chains are functional and accessible, and the viability of cash versus in-kind assistance.

Additional assessments are planned in Unity State, pending humanitarian access guarantees. These will include market assessments, household surveys, and nutritional screenings, coordinated with humanitarian partners and the relevant clusters. Through these assessments, INSPIRE will be retooled to better meet the evolving needs of emergency-affected persons. Planning is also underway for a longer-term Emergency Market Mapping Assessment (EMMA) to further map value chains, and determine the role of markets within the emergency response and longer-term recovery programming.

ANNEX I: IMPACT STORY

The INSPIRE team held a meeting in Mulmul locality at the eastern edge of Abyei town on Wednesday December 18, 2013, to form Cash for Work committees and identify CFW projects and sites. Mr. Dau Malith Dau, an elected member of the committee celebrated the presence of Mercy Corps in the village.



Malual Makuac. INSPIRE officer mobilizing the community in Mulmul

“I am confident that the presence of Mercy Corps will make another U-turn in our lives as it did in 2012 after the Abyei crisis. Through Mercy Corps cash for work, my family was able to afford a goat. We lost everything in Abyei and reached Agok with only the clothing on our backs.” Dau recalled, “As we are now returning to Abyei town it means beginning from the scratch, but we are grateful that Mercy Corps always comes to our aid.”